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## Requiem: All That's Left is Noise

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### Recommended Citation

Dobkin, Danielle R., "Requiem: All That's Left is Noise" (2014). *Senior Projects Spring 2014*. 23.  
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Bard

A Requiem:  
All That's Left is Noise

Senior Project submitted to  
The Division of the Arts  
of Bard College

By  
Danielle R Dobkin

Annandale-On-Hudson, New York  
May 2014

Danielle R. Dobkin  
Artist Statement  
May 2014  
Requiem: All That's Left is Noise

Requiem: All That's Left is Noise is a personal interpretation of the traditional Latin liturgy of the Western Church's Requiem Mass- a composition meant to be the carrier for the soul, on it's journey to paradise. The requiem is comprised of 7 movements: Introit, Kyrie (Lord have Mercy), Dies Irae (Day of Wrath), Lyncrimosa (Day of Weeping), Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), Lux Aeterna (Eternal Light), and the Libera Me (Deliver Me). These seven movements sonically replicate the range of human emotion, ending on the soul's delivery in paradise. In order to get to paradise you must first go through the inferno. Requiem: All That's Left is Noise is for electronics, voice and a small ensemble.

I wanted to create a piece of monumental status, a sonic experience that was a combination of all the things I have learned over the past 4 years. The requiem incorporates psychoacoustic elements, composition as well as sound design.

It wasn't until this year that I thought of myself as a composer. I thought of myself as a sound sculpture, creating intimate sounds with tightly tuned details that you could get lost in. These patches turned into soundscapes, the soundscapes morphed into compositions. Composition for me turned into a combination of loop based patterns in odd meters mixed with evolving sounds that lead from section to section. In experimenting with composition, soundscapes, and loops I also discovered drone music. I found drone music as a medium in which I could easily express my ideas.

In this project I spent a lot of time developing a deep interpretation of the text. From all the Requiems I have listened to, every composer has a slightly different take on what the text is communicating. For example, looking at the Kyrie (Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy) some composers turned this movement into a plea, others, a demand. The Requiem also has a certain atmosphere that encompasses it. I like things that surround you, take over, swallow you whole and spit you back out- this I believe is very present in my work. This may also be why I like a large speaker set up.

The performance aspect of the requiem has been just as important as the composition itself. We've put together a 10.1 speaker set up. Through Ableton I have the opportunity to send sound to wherever I find them to be most theatrically appropriate.

Speaking of theatrics, Verdi had a huge influential role in my requiem. We had perfect timing this semester, in Chamber Singers we learned and performed the Verdi Requiem. He brought about a theatrical absurdity to his requiem that made it close to, if not, operatic. Like myself, Verdi was a secular composer creating a very sacred piece of music.

Ligeti also had a great influence on my Requiem. Unlike the composers of the classical and baroque fashion, Ligeti's requiem raises the question to me, "well, what happens if you're not going to heaven". His perverse and stomach clenching requiem was the invitation I needed create my own.

The title of my project, A Requiem: All That's Left is Noise has an inner meaning. Of course, death has been a topic of conversation this semester. I've learned to understand life as a looped based, continuous structure. Life will always continue in some form or another. Noise is a combination of all the frequencies in the spectrum

combined. Everything is put together however you cannot pinpoint a single tone. Saying “all that is left is noise” means to me that nothing and everything are coexisting together.